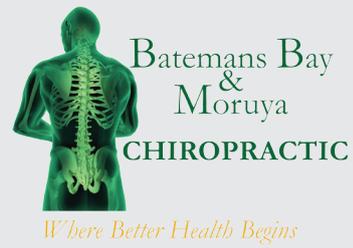


OSTEOARTHRITIS OF THE HIP



CHIROPRACTIC AND OSTEOARTHRITIS OF THE HIP

There are many reasons for having pain over the hip. One of the most common reasons is referred pain from the back. Osteoarthritis of the hip joint is a problem affecting mainly older people and is the most common disease affecting the hip joint, with 25% of women and 15% of men experiencing symptoms over the age of 60 years.

Previous trauma, such as fracture, dislocation or diseases of a joint often predisposes it to osteoarthritic change. You are also more likely to get it if you have a family history of the disease and you are more at risk if you are obese, as that puts more stress on your hips. But you can get osteoarthritis even if you do not have any risk factors.

Symptoms of osteoarthritis of the hip can vary. Your first sign may be a bit of discomfort and stiffness in your groin, buttock or thigh when you wake up in the morning. Commonly, there is a gradual increase of pain over the side of the hip into the groin, with pain down the front of the thigh and into the knee joint. Pain over the knee can be the main presenting symptom and the hip problem can therefore easily be overlooked. The pain is usually worse with activity, especially weight bearing activity such as walking, it can also feel worse with cold weather.

Loss of muscle strength and mobility is often seen, resulting in difficulty running or even walking. It is common to see a so called flexion fixture of the hip, resulting in a very characteristic limp with the person unable to extend the thigh back. The foot tend to turn outwards due to restricted hip movement, so when cycling, the thigh and knee wants to turn out. It also gets more difficult to squat down and put on socks and shoes.

Rest is often found to relieve pain but not always. It depends on the level of inflammation and damage to the joint.

Using a stick for support will usually help you to walk easier.

The Chiropractor performs a detailed examination using chiropractic, orthopaedic, neurological and muscle testing procedures in order to accurately diagnose the problem.

Apart from examining the hip joint, it is important to include an examination of the back, knee, ankle and foot. As all these areas can influence the hip problem.

Although the physical examination usually easily picks up the problem, an x-ray examination is necessary to confirm the diagnosis. The x-ray findings will also give a clearer picture of how severe the problem is. This will help the Chiropractor to give an accurate prognosis, rule out other causes and help to select the most appropriate treatment.

So how can chiropractic treatment help?

The aims of the treatment are:

- Reduce inflammation;
- Strengthening weakened muscles;
- Improving movement of the joint;
- Lifestyle and exercise advice;
- Relaxing painful muscle spasm;
- Nutritional advice.

The treatment will involve stretching and massage techniques to tight and tender muscles, gentle mobilisation techniques and manipulation of the effected joints. You will also be given exercises based on your personal need and fitness level. Supervised exercise-programmes have been shown to be far more effective than unsupervised programmes and we would therefore suggest that it should be your first choice.

Good nutritional support and a healthy lifestyle are of course always important to keep you healthy and feeling well. It becomes particularly important if your body needs to heal from an injury.

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